



DRUGS POLICY



MAY 2021

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> 1. Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- Clarify the school's approach to drugs for staff, children, parents or carers and to clarify the legal requirements and responsibilities
- Give guidance to staff on the school's drugs education programme
- Safeguard the health and safety of children's and staff in our school
- Enable staff to manage drug-related incidents properly
- Recognise the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which states in article 33: "We must protect children from the use of illegal drugs" and article 24: "Every child has the right to the best possible health."

> 2. Terminology

The term 'drugs' is used throughout this policy to refer to all drugs:

- All illegal drugs (those controlled by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971)
- All legal drugs, including alcohol and tobacco and also volatile substances (those giving off a gas or vapour which can be inhaled)
- All medicines, whether over-the-counter or on prescription.

> 3. Merrywood Education statement

Merrywood Education considers the presence of unauthorised drugs in our school are completely unacceptable.

We want our school to be a safe place for us all to work and the presence of unauthorised drugs represents a threat to the health and safety of the children, staff, parents and visitors.

> 4. Executive Head Responsibilities

- Ensure that staff and parents/carers are informed about this drugs policy
- Ensure that the policy is implemented effectively
- Manage any drug-related incidents
- Ensure that staff are given sufficient training, so that they can teach effectively about drugs and handle any difficult issues with sensitivity
- Ensure that children are taught in an age-appropriate fashion about drugs, both legal and illegal and other dangerous substances along with the effects that they have on an individual
- Liaise with external agencies regarding the school drugs education programme
- Monitor the policy on a day-to-day basis and report to governors, when requested, on the effectiveness of the policy.
- Establish general guidelines on drugs education
- Support the headteacher in following these guidelines
- Inform and consult with parents and carers about the drugs education policy
- Liaise with the LA and health organisations, so that the school's policy is in line with the best advice available
- Support the headteacher in any case conferences, or in appeals against exclusions.

> 5. Objectives of drugs education

Drugs education should enable children to develop their knowledge, attitudes and understanding about drugs and to appreciate the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, relating this to their own and others' actions. It should:

- Build on knowledge and understanding
- Provide accurate information and clear up misunderstandings
- Explore attitudes and values and examine the risks and consequences of actions relating to drugs
- Develop childrens' interpersonal skills, their understanding of rules and laws and their self-awareness and self-esteem
- Ensure that all children are taught about drugs in a consistent manner, following guidelines that have been agreed by parents/carers, governors and staff.

> 6. Drugs education

We regard drugs education as a whole-school issue and we believe that opportunities to teach about the importance of a healthy lifestyle occur naturally throughout the curriculum, but especially in science, PSHE, RE and PE. Teaching about drugs will begin at the earliest opportunity when children are taught about seeing the doctor, visiting the chemist and the importance of medicines and their safe handling.

In Key Stage 2 and 3, children will learn about the dangers of drugs and about the high risk of accidental death associated with volatile-substances, especially for first-time and occasional abusers.

We acknowledge that by the time children are in Year 6, some of them may have had some experiences with drugs already so we must help to equip children to handle risky situations, before they actually meet them.

We use a variety of teaching styles that are characterised by active learning. We find out what the children know already, we pose dilemmas and we get the children to discuss choices. Wherever possible, the information we give is visually reinforced. We use drama, role-play or ICT to demonstrate various strategies and scenarios. We encourage them to listen to the views of others and we ask them to explore why drugs are such a problem for society.

We recognise that children with special educational needs may be more vulnerable, that different communities have different attitudes towards drug abuse and that some children may have drug-abusing parents or carers.

> 7. Drugs at school

Parents must meet with a member of the office staff before the school will administer medicine. They will be required to have the medicine at this meeting and will complete a form alongside the member of staff. Parents and carers may visit the school in the lunch break to bring and administer prescribed medication themselves, by prior arrangement.

Where children have medical needs, parents and carers must give us details of the child's condition and medication. Parents and carers will bring the medication to school in a secure, labelled container. Records will be kept of all medication received and given. Emergency medication may be stored securely in the classroom (e.g. for anaphylaxis or asthma); other drugs will be stored securely in the classroom or in the fridge if necessary.

Solvents and other hazardous chemicals must be stored securely to prevent inappropriate access or use by children. Teachers are cautious with older, solvent-based Tippex, with aerosols, with glues and with board-cleaning fluids.

Legal drugs are legitimate in school only when authorised by the Executive Head. Members of staff who smoke must keep their tobacco and matches or lighters off of school property. Smoking is not permitted anywhere in the school.

Alcohol to be consumed at community or parents' events will be stored securely beforehand. To sell alcohol, we must be licensed under the Licensing (Occasional Permissions) Act 1983. Occasionally, members of staff may consume limited amounts of alcoholic drinks in the staff room when no children are present in the school.

> 8. Drugs incidents

The first priority is safety and first aid, i.e. calling the emergency services and placing unconscious people in the recovery position.

Children suspected of being intoxicated from inhaling a volatile substance will be kept calm and the emergency services will be contacted alongside their parent/carer.

Any drug suspected of being illegal will be confiscated and stored securely, awaiting disposal; these precautions must be witnessed and recorded. Staff should not taste unknown or confiscated substances.

Legal but unauthorised drugs or medicines will also be confiscated and will be returned to parents or carers; the school may arrange for the safe disposal of volatile substances.

Where a pupil is suspected of concealing an unauthorised drug, staff are not permitted to carry out a personal search, but may search childrens' bags, trays, etc.

The Executive Head will decide whether the police need to be called or whether the school will manage the incident internally.

A full record will be made of any incident.

The Executive Head will conduct an investigation into the nature and seriousness of any incident, in order to determine an appropriate response.

> 9. The role of parents and carers

We wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with the parents/carers of our children, through mutual understanding, trust and cooperation. To promote this objective, we will:

- inform parents or carers about the school drugs policy;
- answer any questions that parents and carers may have about the drugs education that their child receives in school;
- encourage parents and carers to be involved in reviewing the school policy and making modifications to it as necessary;

When an incident concerning unauthorised drugs has occurred in school and a pupil is involved, we will inform the parents or carers and explain how we intend to respond to the incident.

Staff will be cautious about discharging a child to the care of an intoxicated parent. The focus will be the child's welfare and safety. Where the behaviour of an intoxicated parent places a child at risk, or the parent or carer becomes abusive or violent, staff will report the incident to LA child protection services (MASH) procedures and possibly involve the police.

> 10. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed every two years and the school will assess its implementation and effectiveness. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Executive Head.

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